

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for fabricating a smaller-sized glass rod by elongation of a glass matrix, which comprises:

providing a glass body having a cylindrical form,

grinding a surface of said glass body,

cleaning the ground surface of said glass body by application of pressurized steam, which has a temperature range of 120 to 160 °C and a pressure ranging from 0.27 to 0.63 MPa, the steam being applied by jetting against said glass body from at least one nozzle unit provided around said glass body,

drying the cleaned glass body by exposure to a flow of clean air

~~applying pressurized steam to the ground surface of said glass body,~~

subjecting the dried glass body that received the pressurized steam to a subsequent and separate step wherein the dried glass body is heated to soften the dried glass body to an extent sufficient for subsequent elongation, ~~the steam being applied by jetting against said glass body from at least one nozzle unit provided around said glass body and~~

elongating the softened glass body thereby providing a glass rod having a desired diameter.

2. canceled

3. canceled

4. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass body is ground into a cylinder with free or fixed grains on the surface thereof prior to the application of the pressurized steam.
5. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein after the grinding, said glass body is cleaned with an aqueous solution of an alkali or acid.
6. canceled
7. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said nozzle unit is in a form of a ring having a plurality of nozzles along an inner periphery thereof in face-to-face relation with said glass body.
8. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the application is carried out by moving said at least one nozzle unit while fixing said glass body.
9. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the application is carried out by moving said glass body while fixedly holding said at least one nozzle unit.
10. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass

matrix is made of a glass preform.

11. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass body is made of a glass ingot.

12. canceled.